New Nouveau Brunswick CANADA

News Release

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N.B. Human Rights Commission

Guy LeBlanc to receive 2005 Human Rights Award (05/09/09)

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FREDERICTON (CNB) - The 2005 Human Rights Award will be presented to Guy LeBlanc, of Saint-Antoine, at a ceremony in Fredericton on Sept. 13.

"The Human Rights Award was established by the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission to recognize outstanding effort, achievement, or leadership on a volunteer basis in the promotion of human rights and equality," said Dr. Gordon Porter, chair of the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission.

(Multimedia)

"This year, we are pleased to present the award to Guy LeBlanc. He has worked passionately throughout his life to improve access to education, employment, information, rehabilitation and income security for people with a disability."

LeBlanc was born in Saint-Antoine in 1939. He was partly paralysed by polio at age 7. After years of therapy and several surgeries, he was able to complete his education and to begin a 35-year career as a teacher. He taught mainly at the Clément Cormier high school in Bouctouche and was mayor of Saint-Antoine from 1971 to 1978.

LeBlanc helped establish the Premier's Council on the Status of Disabled Persons and was its first chairperson from 1982 to 1985. One of the agency's key priorities was improving the human rights of persons with a mental or physical disability.

He was also active on committees that introduced integration for students with special needs, and he advocated for improved services for French-speaking New Brunswickers.

In addition, LeBlanc has been a volunteer at the board level in hospitals, a special-care and nursing home and a sheltered workshop, as well as many other organizations.

LeBlanc has received many awards, and was inducted into the Order of New Brunswick in 2002.

"The great challenge of my life was to overcome my disability, to get an education and to earn a living," LeBlanc said. "It was my dream, and I am grateful that I was able to achieve it. However, my work is not finished. Much remains to be done so that people with a disability have access to all the services they need."

The Human Rights Award ceremony will start at 2:30 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 13, at Old Government House in Fredericton. Lt.-Gov. Herménégilde Chiasson will present the award to LeBlanc.

The Human Rights Award is presented each year around New Brunswick Human Rights Day, Sept. 15. That is the anniversary of the date on which the New Brunswick Human Rights Act came into effect in 1967. Last year's award recipient was Dr. Russell McNeilly of Fredericton.

For more information, visit http://www.gnb.ca/hrc-cdp/e/award05.htm online.

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